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*"O Valiant Once who ascended brilliant from within the tomb;
Let me speak about You, concerning your victory filled with wonder.
On Your great feast heaven is glad and earth exults
because in You heaven and earth, that were at enmity,
were reconciled"*

Mar Jacob of Serugh



*Warm Easter wishes to all our readers,
well wishers and supporters!*

EDITORIAL

Church is the continuation of Christ the Church, therefore, is a divine entity, ruled, guided and preserved by Christ. The divine origin, the divine nature of the church is to be seen in the hierarchy, documents, people of god, worship etc. The promised assistance of the Paraclete, Holy Spirit is the consoling factor. The people of God is the community of the saved or redeemed by Jesus. Church history, them, is the history of salvation; the process of salvation or different stages of this salvation. Salvation is something dynamic, which brings fruit and which produces active results.

The historical character of the church rests fundamentally and ultimately on the incarnation of the Logos in the world and its entry into human history. Christ willed that it should be society of human beings, the people of God under the leadership of new, the apostolic college with Pope at its head. Thus Christ made her dependent on human action and human weakness; but he her not left her entirely to her own devices. Her supernatural suprahistorical and transcendent entelechy is the Holy Spirit, who preserves her from ever, produces and maintains holiness within her. His preserve and working in the church, like those of grace in the individual soul, can be inferred from historically comprehensible effects. Thus in the church we come across a co-operation and combination of both divine and human elements or factors which are at work in time and space. For a better understanding of the church one should neither neglect her over-emphasize one factor which detiments the other.

For a believes, God's intervention in history is certain and also visible. This intervention is possible in may a ways, especially through events and previous. God often selects or appoint persons, to be to his spoke-men or instruments of his mission. Blessed Kunjachan, 'an Apostle of the Poor' is a previous thus sent by God or set apart by God to show the would who god is or what god wills. 'I don't possess anything either as landed property or as money. I lived with the Harijan and I should be also buried where the harijan are buried' These words, from the last will of the priest Augustine Thevarparambil called 'Kunjachan' sound like a resume of the whole life mission of the servant of God, dedicated for more

than 40 years to evangelization and to the and spiritual progress of the Harijan who made the marginalized in the society. Great persons do 'wonders' by their own; God works wonder using simple persons. Doing miracles there humble beings glorify God; thus they too are made great. Remember "He casts the mighty from their thrones and raises the lowly" (Lk. 1:52). "For it is to such as these little ones that the kingdom of God belongs" (Mt. 19:14).

The second articles 'The Possibility of new Churches Sui Iuris in the Catholic Church' deals with the different Sui Iuris churches and their specialities. As the author himself points out there are differences with regard to the number of Sui Iuris churches, as 22 or 23 or 24. The reason is that under the communist regime some churches were dispersed, suppressed or disappeared. By the way same reason the possibility of erecting of new churches Sui Iuris cannot be ruled out. The Eastern Code does not close the possibility of erecting and recognizing new churches Sui Iuris. The requirements are stipulated in Canon 27: a community of Christian faithful, hierarchy according to the norm of law and recognition of the supreme authority. The Decree or the catholic Eastern Church Orientalium Ecclesiarum states, "Since the patriarchal system is the traditional form of government in the Eastern churches, the Holy Ecumenical Council wishes, where there is needed, new patriarchates to be set up. This is reserved to an ecumenical council or to the Roman Pontiff (G11).

The loftiest edifies need the deepest foundations. So too the celebration of the most sublime paschal mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ needs solemn Spiritual preparation. Israel prepared for forty years before entering into the promised land; Jesus prepared for forty days (Lk 4:1-2) to begin his public ministry. Which had him to death on the cross; so too we prepare during lent in order to enter into the depth of Christs Passion and then to the Eastern. Let us prepare ourselves in the most diligent manner during them lent, to taste the joy of the Easter.

Editor

BLESSED KUNJACHAN (1891-1973): A Saviour of the Marginalized

James Puliurumbil

Thevarparambil Kunjachan, who was declared blessed on April 30, 2006 was a humble priest. But he made himself great with his zealous pastoral endeavors, never-failing virtues and strenuous work which none dared to do at a time when it was considered despicable or even forbidden. His full energy was utilized and his whole life spent for redeeming a marginalized and oppressed section of society.

1. The person of Kunjachan

1.1. The early background (Childhood)

Thevarparambil Kunjachan was born in 1891 in a good Syrian Catholic family of the Syro-Malabar Church. *Kunjachan*, the pet name given to this missionary by his flock, in the local language Malayalam means 'little priest'. In itself it is a pet name of many Syrian Catholics in Kerala and bears no reference to their physique. In his childhood days he was called 'Kunjagasthy', which means little Augustine (also his baptismal name), again a pet name given to many Syrians of that time. When a baby he was very thin and slender,

and when grown up too, was very small in stature just as his name happened to suggest a diminutive physique as well. Normally people would get offended being addressed by any name indicative of their irremediable physical handicaps or deformities. But Kunjachan is never known to have resented to being addressed this way, normally provocative in other circumstances. Or was it a real voluntary acceptance of a humble role, that after all he was only a humble being not to be thought much of; just a small priest of no consequence!¹. Thus his name itself is a replica of his person and a proof of his virtuous life.

Thevarparambil is his family name, which is a branch of the illustrious Kuzhumpil family which had its origin from the famous Mullasseri family of Kaduthuruthy, which is an ancient Christian centre². This Mullasseri family can again be traced back to Pakalomattam family, one among the few families, which has a history, therefore, from the very time of St. Thomas³. Documents of the Syrian Church of Kerala witness that the

1 K.C. Chacko, *The Apostle of Harijans*, Kochi, 1987, p. 25

2 Kaduthuruthy an ancient port city has great history and it is believed that a Christian community was formed there from the very beginning of Christianity in India together with other ancient Christian centres. The first Church is believed to have been built in the fifth century. The second Church was built there in 1009 which later in the 16th century was used by the Dominicans as their seminary chapel according to documents. For details see J. Puliurumpil, *Edavakakalude Charithram* (Malayalam), Pala, 1997, p. 25

3 Pakalomattom, Sankarapuri, Kallik, Kaliakkavu, Koikara, Madeipuru, Muttodal, Nedumpally, Panakkamattam, Kottakal were the first Namboothiri families converted by St. Thomas. A.C. Perumalil, *The Apostles in India*, Patna 1952, p. 95

archdeacon was always from the Pakalomattam family. The tombs of the archdeacons⁴ of this Church are seen intact even today in the place called Pakalomattam, 3 k.m. away from Kuravilangad on the M.C. Road in Kottayam direction. In the 16th century one person of this Mullasseri family from Kaduthuruthy had come and settled in Kuravilangad, which again was a very ancient Christian centre⁵. Around 1750 A. D. three brothers of Mullasseri family settled in Ramapuram, almost 18. k.m. distant from Kuravilangad and formed three families there. Kuzhumpil was one among them, to which Kunjachan belonged. To the people he was Thevarparambil Kunjachan, but his official name was Fr. Augustuine Kuzhumpil.

Besides Fr. Augustine, there were 3 priests at the same time from the Kuzhumpil family of Ramapuram: Fr. Thomas Kuzhumpil and Fr. Joseph Kuzhumpil who were uncles to Fr. Augustine and Fr. Sebastian Kuzhumpil CMI, his nephew. There were priests in four

successive generations in Kuzhumpil family, a rare but glorious occurrence. Fr. Thomas and Fr. Joseph were great men in the sense that while they were parish priests in Ramapuram⁶ they had contributed much to the development of that region by establishing schools, hospitals, convents etc. Fr. Thomas had already commenced work on the conversion of Dalits, which later was followed by Kunjachan, of course on a larger scale.

1.2. Education

The parish of Ramapuram has had the fortune to be served by numerous able priests. Kunjachan's house is little less than a kilometer from the parish church. It helped him to have an easy access to the parish priests as well as the parish activities, which cultivated in him an aptitude towards priesthood from his childhood days, which should have naturally been fostered by his uncle priests.

4 Till the coming of the western missionaries, bishops coming from the Persian Church were giving spiritual leadership to the St. Thomas Christians. But the real administration of the diocese, especially of the temporalities, was carried on by the archdeacons. Archdeacon was always a priest of high reputation and manifold abilities, who bears the title 'Archdeacon of All India'.

5 Kuravilangad is the ancient most Church (also parish) in the diocese of Pala. According to the tradition some of the first converts of St. Thomas came and settled in the place called Kalikavu, 4 k.m. away from Kuravilangad on the M.C. Road (i.e. only one k.m. distant from Pakalomattam) and this place thus became the first Christian centre in this region. (Today it is a separate parish). It is important to note that Kalikavu was one among the first families converted by St. Thomas. Therefore one can rightly say that the present day Kalikavu (place) has got its name from the very first century family name of Kalikavu or Kaliankavu. Only in later period Kalikavu gradually lost its importance and the nearby Kuravilangad began to dominate, especially in the low and middle medieval period of Kerala Church history. See the details in J. Pulurumpil, *Edavakakalude Charithram*, pp. 17-20.

6 Ramapuram is a famous village or township in Kerala, in Kottayam district. It is the home of the famous poet Ramapurathu Warrier and of the poetess Lalithambika Antharjanam, and the residence of Paremakal Thomakathanar, the *Governador* of the archdiocese of Kodungalloor and author of the celebrated travelogue *Varthamana Pusthakam* (Book of Narratives), the first of its kind in Malayalam also the first in any Indian language. Ramapuram being a Forane Church in the diocese of Pala consists of 1485 families and 10445 parishioners. There are four convents, eleven schools (1 Higher Secondary, 2 High Schools, 3 Upper Primaries and 5 Lower Primaries), one college. And from this parish there are 53 priests and 217 sisters for the service of the Church. See for details J. Pulurumpil, *Daivavilayude Nattil* (Malayalam), Pala, 2001, p. 317.

As it was the practice in those days to send children at the age of four or five to *Kalari* – the then village schools - to be imparted the preliminary studies by the *asans*, (preceptors) who were generally Hindus, Kunjagasthy too was sent to one such *asan*. At the age of six he was sent to the Government school which was conducted in a building put up by the church in its premises⁷.

Those were days when high school education was considered a normal prelude to seminary life and a priestly vocation. It may be because priests were the better educated citizens of the society at the time. In any case, Kunjachan was encouraged to take up high school studies by his parents. The CMI Congregation had an English High School called St. Ephrems at Mannanam, near Kottayam, where most of the young men of that time had any higher education. Naturally Kunjachan also joined this school which was almost 50 kilometers away from his homeland Ramapuram. He also got admission in the St. Aloysius Boarding House attached to the school, where all the students were from well-to-do families. This gave Kunjachan occasion to get acquainted with many future eminent leaders of society⁸.

After having completed the studies at Mannanam in 1912 Kunjachan joined the

Minor seminary at Changanacherry to undergo priestly training. As a seminarian there was nothing extraordinary about him to be noted as he was just ordinary and average in studies, but very rich in prayer life. After three years of training, in 1915 he was sent to Puthenpally Major seminary, which was the only seminary in Kerala at that time for both the Latin and Syrian rites⁹. As in the minor seminary, in the Major seminary also Kunjachan was not outstanding or extraordinary in any respect. His contemporaries recall him as a zealously obedient seminarian, but always the smallest in physique¹⁰. On 17th December 1921 Kunjachan was ordained priest by Mar Thomas Kurialacherry, bishop of Changanacherry.

Kunjachan started his ministry in his own parish Ramapuram, where there were at the time one parish priest and two assistants. After having served there for one year, in February 1923 he was appointed assistant at Kadanad, near Pala where his uncle, Fr. Thomas Kuzhumpil was parish priest. He continued his service at Kadanad till 26th March 1926, during which time he began to show his special charism in the pastoral field¹¹. In January 1926 he became sick and was advised not to continue his work in the parish. As he was not fit enough to resume his work, in

7 Cf. K. Mathothu, *Kunjachan, The Missionary Among the Harijans in India*, Pala, 1995, p.3

8 K.C. Chacko, *The Apostle of Harijans*, p. 32.

9 The Carmelite missionaries from Spain set up a seminary at Varapuzha in 1682 and it was shifted to Puthenpally near Varapuzha in 1866. The major seminary at Puthenpally continued till it was transferred to Mangalapuzha in 1932. See for details T. Puthiakunnel, *Seminaries in Kerala*, pp. 16-19

10 The authorities differed in their opinion on the question of ordaining dwarflike persons like Kunjachan. When Msgr. Zaleski, the papal delegate in India visited Mangalapuzha seminary, the Rector consulted him on this matter. As he was lacking in no quality to be ordained except his physical stature, Kunjachan was granted the necessary permission by the concerned authorities. Cf. K.C.Chacko, *The Apostle of Harijans*, p. 38

11 K. Mathothu, *Daivadasan Kunjachan (Malayalam)*, Ramapuram 2001, p. 13

March he was relieved of his pastoral duties at Kadanad and he returned to Ramapuram, which was a turning point in his life – the beginning of a new vocation, ministry among the Dalits.

2. Ministry among the Dalits

In his land Kunjachan is still called 'the apostle of Harijans' (Dalits). When we understand the life-situation of the Dalits of that time in Central Kerala, we will see that the title is well-deserved.

2.1. Miserable situation of the Dalits

The Parayas (Sambavars), Pulayas (Cheramars) and Kuravas¹² who form the important sections of Dalits are a considerable number in the population of Kerala. In Malabar, Kochi and Travancore slavery seems to have prevailed from a very remote period, most probably from the time of the conquest of the aboriginal inhabitants by invaders and settlers from the North. For thousands of years these agrarian serfs continued to exist in a state of hereditary bondage, exposed to the caprice or at times to the brutality of the owner, and disposable according to his will and pleasure. The Brahmins and the members of the castes below them had a number of bondsmen born in slavery. Syrian Christians also possessed

them in large numbers. As one of its results, till recent past society was divided into various grades arranged in the order of social precedence, Dalits being the last¹³. This lowest class was looked upon as the rejects in the social set up. They didn't enjoy the normal human privileges of equality in any respect. They were treated as untouchables. Even when the constitution of India was drawn up their existence was recognized as a special class and they were included in a separate schedule¹⁴.

The deplorable situation of Dalits anywhere in India is no exception. The extent of their oppression and dehumanization becomes clear by the fact that they were not even considered to be enumerated as citizens in the early census. It is reported, "Many of the more bigoted high caste *Hindoos* employed as census enumerators or supervisors objected to record such low persons as of the *Hindoo* religion. ... Possibly some in their humility and ignorance may not even have claimed to be of the *Hindoo* religion. More probably they were not even asked"¹⁵.

For centuries they were treated as untouchables and even unapproachables. They were not allowed to enter places of worship, schools or other public places. Ananthakrishna Ayyer while studying the anthropology of

12 George Oommen describes these three groups of Dalits. See George Oommen (Biju), *Growth of Pentecostalism in Central Kerala from 1921-47: A Paradigm for Pentecostal Growth of Churches in North India*, Indian Church History Review, December 2001. pp. 131-138. The Parayas and Pulayas, as well as the Kuravas were the lowest group in the social scale. The Kuravas were a class of agricultural labourers found in certain parts of central and south Travancore. The author studies these three groups in the light of Pentecostal Movements in Kerala. In his study he describes well the attitude of Christians towards the Dalits.

13 Ananthakrishna Ayyer, *Anthropology of Syrian Christians*, Ernakulam, 1926, p. 208

14 That is the reason why they are called 'Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes'. They are considered separately to be protected by the law; but in effect they are viewed as separate citizens, of low rank. And therefore, they cannot catch up with the upper classes. For details see K.C.Chacko, *The Apostle of Harijans*, p. 45

15 Report of the Census of British India taken on 17th February 1881, Vol. I, as quoted in John Zaos, *The Emergence of Hindu Nationalism in India*, p. 4.

Syrians writes, "On account of the law of castes, all these slaves have been engaged solely in field work, and not in domestic service, because they could not enter the houses of their masters. Even in the fields their work was and is even now owing to pollution, superintended by their Hindu masters"¹⁶. They were bought and sold like cattle and were often badly treated. The owners had formerly power to flog and enchain them, and in some cases to maim them and to deprive them of their lives¹⁷.

2.2. Situations change

Their situations changed a lot in later period. Various measures for bettering their condition and their emancipation were adopted by the Governments of Cochin and Travancore. Under the influence of the Madras Government, the Raja's Proclamation in 1853 set free the future offspring of Government slaves, and this somewhat modified the condition of other slaves. In June 1855 was issued another Proclamation, which liberated all Government slaves. It provided for the acquisition and possession of property and often obtained redress for

injuries done to them in the same manner as those done to others. The Governments of Cochin and Travancore are doing their best to elevate them by the establishment of schools for the education of Pulaya boys, by giving them admission in Government schools and also sites for house building¹⁸. The Temple Entry Proclamation in 1936 by the king of Travancore too gave the low class Hindus a good sort of acceptance¹⁹. Christianity has done much for the Pulayas who have embraced Christianity in Travancore and Kochi²⁰. There were many attempts from their own side, as for example the formation of Cheramar Sabha which was formed in 1919, and in the same period the Organization of Sambavars²¹. Around this time, the struggles of the Dalits found a national status. Dr. Ambedkar and other Dalit leaders started All India Depressed Classes to unite the Dalits, to fight for their rights and to carry out educational and welfare activities among the Dalits²².

It is true that their conditions changed a lot due to the laws of the state and the works of Christian missionaries. In spite of the social

16 Ananthakrishna Ayyer, *Anthroology of Syrian Christians*, p. 208

17 Ananthakrishna Ayyer, *Anthropology of Syrian Christians*, p. 212.

18 Ananthakrishna Ayyer, *Anthroplogy of the Syrian Christians*, p. 213

19 Cf. T.T. Mundackal, *Pavangalude Kunjachan* (Malayalam), Kochi, 2000, pp. 106-107. As the other castes all the lower castes were permitted to enter all state temples. However, this proclamation came in the way of conversion of lower castes into Christianity. Actually it led to a larger drain from the converted fold back to their original states. Cf. K.C. Chacko, *The Apostle of Harijans*, p. 73

20 Ananthakrishna Ayyer, *Anthropology of the Syrian Christians*, p. 214. Pentecostal and other such Christian movements, CSI, Mar Thoma Church, Orthodox churches and Syrian Churches contributed a lot in the revival of Dalits in Central Kerala. Cf. George Oommen (Biju), *Growth of Pentecostalism in Central Kerala from 1921-47: A Paradigm for Pentecostal Growth of Churches in North India*, *Indian Church History Review*, December 2001, pp. 131-136.

21 Sambavars joined together under the leadership of Pazhoor Raman Chenan. See the details in George Oommen, *Indian Church History Review*, December 2001, p. 133

22 Prakash Louis, Bettiah Mission, Tribal Mission and Dalit Mission in Bihar Three Streams but One Socio-Religious Movement, *Indian Church History Review*, December 2000, p. 145

elevation of Pulayas, Parayas, Nayadis and Ulladans through conversion to Christianity, they were not enabled to enjoy the privileges of their Christian masters. They were not allowed to sit along with them in churches or in public places. Churches had to be erected for them. In Travancore the new converts had their own churches, but were seldom allowed to enjoy the same privileges as the members of the community²³.

2.3 Beginning of the mission

In March 1926 a popular mission and a general retreat was held at the parish of Ramapuram²⁴. The preachers advised the participants of the retreat to bring with them all the Parayas and Pulayas under their control to attend church on the last day of the retreat. The faithful responded positively and brought to the church a couple of hundred of these Dalits. They were given elementary instructions on the fundamentals of faith and then served meals. Towards evening, those who were willing to receive baptism were invited to stay on. Except four or five all others were baptized. Most of those baptized were the Pulayas who were living on the land of the respectable old Christians of the parish and were working for them. Those landlords were charged with the responsibility of catechizing the neophytes²⁵.

In the following days more Dalits were brought to baptism due to the endeavours of the parish priest and the assistants²⁶. Several laymen helped in bringing about these conversions and the old Christians gave all encouragement. Several catechists volunteered to give religious instruction to the new converts. It was at this auspicious juncture that Kunjachan arrived on the scene²⁷. During this time Kunjachan was residing at Ramapuram and helping the priests in parish activities. In three to four months he got really involved in the new task. Gradually he was raised to the position of a leader, reformer and protector of a new large group.

His was a voluntary mission, but not an easy job. Instructing them in the essentials of faith, weaning them from many superstitious practices, making them good Christians and raising them up equal with their masters were all difficult, but necessary. There were many Pulayas in the neighbourhood living like slaves of their non-christian landlords. Kunjachan had to win them also over to his flock. It was not an easy task to preserve them in the new faith and to develop a new morality in those illiterate people. It called for very severe, persistent and persevering labours from him.

He started many *Kalaris* in different places in and around Ramapuram and *asans* and catechists were employed to instruct the new

23 Ananthakrishna Ayyer, *Anthropology of Syrian Christians*, p. 215

24 Rev. Fr. Hilarion TOCD was the retreat preacher, who was assisted by two other Carmelite priests, who were all well known preachers of that time.

25 Cf. K. Mathothu, *Daivadasan Kunjachan*, p. 14

26 It so happened that the leader of those who had stayed away from baptism was stung by a snake. Naturally it caused fear for all. This victim passed away within a few days. But before death he had asked for the privilege of baptism. And he was baptized and given an honourable burial. K.C.Chacko, *The Apostle of Harijans*, p. 48

27 Cf. K.Mathothu, *Kunjachan, The Missionary Among the Harijans in India*, p. 19

brethren. Many noble men of Ramapuam encouraged Kunjachan giving him all help. He either instructed the Dalits in the *Kalaris* or went in search of them visiting their houses. This gave a new impetus to the social and moral revival of the Dalits of Ramapuram and the neighbouring regions. This emerging new apostolate was centred on the person of Kunjachan²⁸. He was very enthusiastic in this work and showed great briskness and zeal.

2.4. Modus Operandi

He used to get up as early as half past four in the morning and work till late in the evening, nay far into the night. This was the routine he followed not for days and months but over many years till he became 70 years old when his health began to decline²⁹. Soon after Holy Mass and breakfast, he would set out each day in a different direction in search of the homes of the newly converted. He would step in at every house of those converts and collect detailed information on the conditions of those who were baptized by him³⁰.

He shared their joys and sorrows. If he heard of anyone of them being ill anywhere, he would hurry up there and render whatever help was necessary and possible. He was anxious to hear confessions even during the

trips as is seen from his diaries. He would enquire into and try to settle disputes and quarrels among the new fraternity. His remedial steps included advice, compulsion, reproof and chastisement. It would be evening by the time he would return to his residence. Lunch was often skipped as he moved from home to home amidst the Pulayas. He hardly accepted meals from anyone during his itinerary, either from the Pulaya homes or from the neighbouring houses of the old Christians³¹.

Ramapuram was a big parish, extending over a vast area. Kunjachan's attention and care for the Harijans extended not only within the limited jurisdiction of the parish, but in other villages and regions on the periphery of the parish. There was not a single Harijan home in that region which was not visited by Kunjachan several times.

The reception which Kunjachan got in different places from the Dalits, was not always pleasant. He met them either on their workspot, or on their way to and from the workplace and occasionally in their homes. Some of them welcomed him; others were indifferent; some even resented his call. Yet others avoided him or scolded him; some rebuked him³². But those who welcomed him

28 Cf. K.Mathothu, *Kunjachan, The Missionary Among the Harijans in India*, p. 20

29 Cf. T.T.Mundackal, *Pavangalude Kunjachan*, p. 29

30 K. Mathothu, *Daivadasan Kunjachan*, p. 17

31 Not that there were no exceptions. People recall how on one of his itineraries, he yielded to the pressing invitation of a local Hindu chief, Sankaran Nair of Mutikattu to share in his festive Onam meal. The host felt so honoured that he did not allow Kunjachan to remove the 'leafplate' after he had finished his meals served on it. It was considered the privilege only of the high castes to leave the plantain leaves used as plates laid on the floor which should be removed by the host himself. Cf. K.C.Chacko, *The Apostle of the Harijans*, p. 53

32 Sometimes he was accused of converting the Dalits. But the fact was that the landlords did not like seeing the Dalits improved in their hapless plight. See the details in K. Mathothu, *Kunjachan, The Missionary Among the Harijans in India*, p. 23.

sought his blessings, help and guidance. These different ways of reception did not irritate him, but rather made him cheerful to deal with them gracefully.

It was Kunjachan's habit to note things in his diary. A brief perusal of the same gives us a clear idea about his work and his mission³³. Two examples are given below:

17th August 1930, Sunday

Rose at half past four, went to the church at 5 in the morning. Heard the confessions of about 40 Harijans. Eight persons were baptized. The service in the church lasted till 1 p.m.

13th September, Saturday

Rose at four in the morning. Offered Mass at 5.30. Recited the morning prayer. Heard confessions. By 8 a.m. went over to places like Kondad and Koodapalam. Visited Harijan homes ... Returned for lunch by 3 p.m.

He was content with the daily meetings with these apparently small persons who literally formed the scum of society. But to him they were all big, immensely important, to be redeemed for God.

2.5. The difficulties and problems he faced

i. Raising funds

In general Kunjachan had hardly any financial problem in his missionary enterprise as it was not a business demanding any amount of money. He was not giving any help to these Dalits in the form of money, except a small sum as service charge to the catechists³⁴. Other

expenses were met either by himself or from the voluntary help of the good people of the locality. It was his one great ambition to build a church for the Harijans. But to raise the funds necessary for that was a great problem. In 1928 through a Christmas carol he could collect Rs. 900, equivalent to 1 lakh today. Another fund was raised by the seminarians from Ramapuram who went about among the faithful collecting donations for the propagation of Faith on all important festivals in the Church³⁵.

ii. To improve the lot of the people

The Dalits were steeped in ignorance and laid low by slavery. Their superstitions were to be wiped out. They knew only to toil. What little they received, they spent the same day. They had to be lifted up to the life of real human beings. In this responsible work he was helped by his parishioners and priests to some extent. The parish church donated new clothes and the parishioners cooperated by donating a handful of rice from every meal they prepared at home³⁶.

iii. To improve the social life

Kunjachan had to face many problems in establishing a social life for the new converts which would become their new state. It was extremely difficult to convince them of the justice and righteousness of monogamy and the permanence of marriage. As a tribe they were polygamous or polyandric. Another task was to try to reunite the separated couples. He had to use all arts, inducement and

33 K.C. Chacko, *The Apostle of Harijans*, p. 56.

34 The details regarding the payment of catechists described in the diary written by Kunjachan is seen in K. C. Chacko, *The Apostle of Harijans*, pp. 56-59; p. 72, T.T. Mundackal, *Pavangalude Kunjachan*, p. 104

35 Cf. K.C.Chacko, *The Apostle of Harijans*, p. 61

36 Cfr. K. Mathothu, *Daivadasan Kunjachan*, p. 21

persuasion to reunite separated couples³⁷. He had to visit them personally time and again to settle their differences. Sometimes he sent his catechists to summon such people to the church to try to effect reunion or other settlements.

iv. To cultivate good habits and virtues

They were mostly day labourers, responding to the summons of those who sought their services daily. Sometimes they say 'yes' to the call of the landowners and then would not fulfill their promises. Only by long and enduring advice and persuasion could Kunjachan make them behave more honestly, desisting from giving false promises to those who seek their help³⁸. He impressed on all the converts the dire need for the practice of justice and honesty in all matters.

2.6. In the path of progress

The new converts to Christianity who were mostly from the Pulaya, Paraya and hunter castes had been classes, or even of the bonded labour class who were bought and sold for a price. Many of the slaves themselves were opposed to a way of life to which they were not accustomed so far. Therefore, they avoided Kunjachan. The landlord class, naturally was opposed to their uplift³⁹. But Kunjachan was never discouraged by any of these adverse circumstances. He was sure that

only if the depressed and the down trodden classes were emancipated psychologically from an acquiescence in their state of slavery, could they be lifted up spiritually and materially. Kunjachan thought of various means to produce in them a sense of self reliance and self sufficiency. In 1927 he got registered for the first time a **Cooperative Society** at Ramapuram. Its president and secretary were from among the Dalits⁴⁰. As they did not know how to read or write, Kunjachan maintained all the records, minutes, accounts, resolutions etc- all written by himself⁴¹.

Another step to progress was a **small savings scheme** conducted for them. Many including non-Harijans joined the scheme and saved a good amount. Withdrawals were permitted from the savings fund accumulated with interest. Kunjachan himself was keeping all the accounts. The records show that they were run properly and efficiently⁴².

Kunjachan started setting up **village schools** for teaching the Dalit children, as they were denied admission in the govt. schools at that time. The catechists were engaged as teachers in these schools. It is true that the schools run by churches and other private schools admitted students from all classes. But many of the parents were unwilling or not in a position to send their children to the schools⁴³.

37 There are certain interesting incidents where Kunjachan showed great prudence and courage in trying to reunite the separated couples. Cf. T.T.Mundackal, *Pavangalude Kunjachan*, pp. 95-96, K. Mathothu, *Daivadasan Kunjachan*, pp. 22-23.

38 K.C. Chacko, *The Apostle of Harijans*, p. 64

39 Cfr. T.T. Mundackal, *Pavangalude Kunjachan*, p. 100

40 K. Mathothu, *Daivadasan Kunjachan*, p.35

41 K.C. Chacko, *The Apostle of Harijans*, p. 68

42 T.T. Mundackal, *Pavangalude Kunjachan*, p. 100

43 Going to the schools was considered at that time an unnecessary thing. The parents wanted the grown up children to stay at home to look after their younger kids. Therefore, the parents or the elderly were to be educated first, so that they may induce their younger ones to go to schools. This task demanded more patience and effort from Kunjachan. Therefore, he had to repeatedly visit many houses in this connection.

Due to his persuasion many parents agreed to send their children to the schools. Kunjachan supplied them with books, slates, pencils and other aids for study. Even with all such pressures and inducements students who could complete the fourth class were few. Fewer still were those who could pursue studies at the English school⁴⁴. Such candidates were specially helped by Kunjachan even with meals on several days⁴⁵.

An office of the Cheramar Christian Organization was functioning in Ramapuram from 1955⁴⁶. He took the lead in **conducting the meetings of this organization** on very grand scales. Kunjachan arranged with the Sisters and the educated laity from the parish, to select and train the neophytes for such participation. Those who were hitherto forbidden even to walk freely in the streets became capable of appearing on the stage to sing, dance and to act in dramas. This change aroused in them a healthy sense of self confidence⁴⁷.

Kunjachan had elected leaders (Moopans) from the Harijan Catholics at

different centres. He negotiated all the activities in many places through these leaders. They accompanied him on his visits in the region. Cases of sickness and other matters were reported to Kunjachan by these Moopans. Absentees from the church and those living scandalously even after conversion were also contacted through these elders. They were good in teaching them prayers⁴⁸.

A study of his diary tells us that Kunjachan had baptized 4964 persons. But those who benefited from him in many ways were hundred thousands. A section of people who were considered inhuman and neglected in the first half of the 20th century became a people acceptable and wanted in the second half. In 1960 Dalit Christians were **represented in the Ramapuram Parish Assembly**. And today there is Dalit representation in the diocesan Assembly as well⁴⁹.

2.8 Till the last breath

Kunjachan called his Dalit brethren 'my children' or 'my people'. And they were really so. That was the reason why many in his own

44 K. C. Chacko, *The Apostle of Harijans*, p. 71.

45 See the first hand report from one such beneficiary: It was Fr. Kunjachan who got me admitted in the Boys' School at Ramapuram. He used to come to my house while returning from places like Areekara and Uzhavoor. As it would be late in the evening, he took me also to the church along with him. Often I stayed with him over night. I proceeded to school from there, after breakfast there. I returned to his room for noon meals also. He would keep a portion of his for me. Meals were brought to him from his home. When he was out of station on any day, he used to leave a banana for me in the fireplace. I used to take it and drink some water..... K.C. Chacko, *The Apostle of Harijans*, p. 71

46 K.Mathothu, *Daivadasan Kunjachan*, p. 35. Later it was known as or merged with ACMS, HCMS, DCMS

47 Cf. K. Mathothu, *Kunjachan, the Missionary Among the Harijans in India*, p. 33

48 Cf.T.T. Mundackal, *Pavangalude Kunjachan*, p. 104. One such elder was given a weekly allowance of a rupee and five measures of rice. for details see K.C. Chacko, *The Apostle of Harijans*, p. 72

49 In the diocese of Pala to which Ramapuram belongs, there is 10% reservation for the Dalits in the educational institutions; and the Dalit students get 50% fee concession. According to the new diocesan statistics, in the diocesan limit the 4600 Dalit Christian families occupy 536 acres of land. Out of 36000 Dalit Christians there is an engineer, 2 doctors, 1 sister and 3 seminarists.

50 T.T.Mundackal, *Pavangalude Kunjachan*, p. 89

land called him 'priest of the pulayas' (in the local language Malayalm 'peleredachan') in a ridiculous tone⁵⁰. He spent his whole life and everything he had for 'his children'. As he was approaching the end of his life he had nothing in his possession, and therefore there was no need of registering any 'will' which he had already written on a paper⁵¹.

In 1960 as he could not carry on any more, he entrusted the affairs of the Dalits to one of the assistants of Ramapuram who continued the mission begun by Kunjachan. From then onwards the Dalit mission was undertaken in the parish level by one of the assistants as had been willed by Kunjachan. Till his death on 16th October 1973 his sole concern was his Dalit 'children' and from then on he remains a recognized mediator in Heaven.

A quite humble man with his very simple work of Christian charity and selfless service produced extraordinary results in a lowly people within a short time. Doing ordinary things in an extraordinary way made Kunjachan extraordinary and great. His tomb, visited today by a good number of people, is a clear proof that he continues to live in history. The working classes, comprising of many and varied castes and creeds, who were neglected and overlooked both by the colonial and post-colonial governments of past centuries, are the ordinary Indians who form the majority. As Kunjachan focused his efforts on one such ordinary Indian class, he became a social reformer and a missionary with a great vision. What he accomplished through his life and work is a glorious chapter in the history of Christianity in India.

51 In the document we read: I do not possess anything either as land property or as cash account. Neither do I owe anybody anything. ... After my death, the funeral must be conducted in the most simple way. Ever since 1926, I had been staying with the Harijan (Dalit) Christians. Even after death, I would like to be with them. Therefore, my dead body should be buried, where the Harijan Christians are buried. The news of my death should not be published in newspapers ... The coffin should not cost more than twenty five Rupees. Don't celebrate the *Sradham* (the ceremonial meal conducted along with the liturgical prayers, on anniversary days of deceased people) with a ceremonial meal. Instead it is enough that the prayers for the dead be done at the sepulchre. It is requested that on that occasion, the members of the family and the Harijan Christians make their confession, receive Holy Communion and pray for the souls in Purgatory. K. Mathothu, *Kunjachan, The Missionary Among the Harijans in India*, pp.38-39

THE POSSIBILITY OF NEW CHURCHES *SUI IURIS* IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Dr. Michael Vattappalam

Introduction

The Eastern Code, *Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium* states in its first canon that the canons of this Code concern all and only the Eastern Catholic Churches. Which are these Eastern Catholic Churches? The Eastern Code does not identify them by name or number. What we have in this regard is the statement in canon 28 # 2 that these Churches belong to five traditions with a variety of rites. The Decree of the Second Vatican Council on the Catholic Eastern Churches taught that the Catholic Church is a communion of Particular Churches of the East and of the West¹. This document too did not identify them by name or determine their number. According to the *Annuario Pontificio* of 2006² there are 23 Churches *sui iuris*. Among them 22 are of Eastern Catholic Churches and one Latin Church. Compared to the *Annuarios Pontifico* published in the previous years there was a difference in the number of the Churches *sui iuris* in the Byzantine tradition.

And in some other articles appeared in the Internet we find, the number still rises to 24. Thus there exists a confusion regarding the number of these Churches. In this article we see what is a Church *sui iuris*, which are the Churches *sui iuris* recognized by the supreme authority of the Church and the possibility of new Churches *sui iuris* in the Catholic Church.

I. WHAT IS A CHURCH *SUI IURIS*?

Canon 27 defined a Church *sui iuris* as follows, “A community of the Christian faithful, which is joined together by a hierarchy according to the norm of law and which is expressly or tacitly recognized as *sui iuris* by the supreme authority of the Church, is called in this Code a Church *sui iuris*”. This canon substitute the terminology ‘Particular Church’ used in the Decree *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*. Among the guidelines given to the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of the Eastern Code, the direction for the clarification of the notion of Rite and Particular Churches was

1 Here Particular Churches means Churches *sui iuris* as used in CCEO and not dioceses as used in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus* and *Codex Iuris Canonici* of 1983. For a detailed study of the usage of this terminology to denote individual Churches see, I. Zuzek, *Understanding the Eastern Code*, Rome, 1997, pp. 94-109; G. Nedungatt, , ed. , *A Guide to the Eastern Code: A Commentary on the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, Rome, 2002, pp. 102-105; Abbass, “The *Pastor Bonus* and the Eastern Catholic Churches”, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 60 (1994) 587-610; D. Salachas, *Istituzioni di diritto canonico delle Chiese cattoliche orientali*, Rome, 1993, pp. 62-65.

2 The official Year Book of the Vatican; see, *Annuario Pontificio* 2006, Vatican City, pp. 1158-1162.

included. In order to avoid the terminological confusion the notion of Rite was reexamined and a new term- Church *sui iuris*- was agreed upon to designate the various Particular Churches of the East and the West. It is beyond our scope of study here to deal with this terminological problem existed before the codification. According to this definition there are three elements for a Church *sui iuris*:

i) **A community of Christian faithful:** One of the basic elements of a Church *sui iuris* is the community of Christian faithful. Canon 7 # 1 gives a definition of Christian faithful: "The Christian faithful are those who, incorporated as they are into Christ through baptism, are constituted as the people of God; and so, participating in their own way in the priestly, prophetic and royal function of Christ, they are called, each according to his or her condition, to exercise the mission which God has entrusted to the Church to fulfill in the world". There is a fundamental equality among the Christian faithful because of baptism but there is a functional inequality due to the difference in vocation. This canon reminds us of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council concerning baptism as incorporation into Christ, the Church as the people of God, the participation of all the Christian faithful in the threefold offices of Christ namely priestly, prophetic and royal function, the universal mission of salvation entrusted to the Church and the responsibility which every Christian has in its realization³.

One may rightly doubt whether the term Christian faithful can be applied to all the

baptized or only Catholics. Paragraph two of this canon and canon 8 provide sufficient clarification for this doubt. The second paragraph says: "This Church, constituted and organized in this world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church, governed by the successor of Peter and the bishops in communion with him (can 7#2). And canon 8 states "In full communion with the Catholic Church on this earth are those baptized persons who are joined with Christ in its visible structure by the bonds of the profession of faith, the sacraments and ecclesiastical governance". Accordingly, the term is intended to designate only those baptized persons who are members of an Eastern Catholic Church⁴. *Lumen Gentium* n. 8 teaches about the Church as subsisting in the Catholic Church and this teaching is taken into the second paragraph of canon 7. According to canon 8 there are three inseparable essential bonds for the full communion with the Catholic Church⁵. They are:

a) **Profession of faith:** The person who receives baptism is to be instructed in the truths of the faith. In the case of infants at least one of the godparents (canon 685 # 3) must have received three sacraments of initiation, be in full communion with the Catholic Church and be willing to carry out the responsibilities of a person. The faithful are obliged to obey as it is contained in the deposit of faith and is set forth as being divinely revealed (canon 598). They have to obey also what the pastors of the Church teach as representatives of Christ (canon 15 # 1).

3 See, *Lumen Gentium*, G. Nedungatt, , ed. , *A Guide to the Eastern Code*, p. 82.

4 J.D. Faris, *The Eastern Catholic Churches: Constitution and Governance*, New York, 1992, p.119.

5 Ibid, p. 120-121.

b) **Sacraments:** The sacrament of the Eucharist is the highest expression of communion in the Church. The faithful have the right to the sacraments (canon 16). For this they must be free of any censures like minor or major excommunication of the Church.

c) **Ecclesiastical governance:** The Catholic Church is a hierarchically organized community of believers under the direction of the Supreme authority of the Church, the Roman Pontiff and the college of bishops (canons 42, 43, 49) and the faithful have the obligation to accept and obey them (canon 15 # 1).

Thus from these canons it is clear who is a Christian faithful. All these elements must be fulfilled to consider a believing community as a community of Christian faithful as envisaged in the Code.

ii) Hierarchy: The second element of a Church *sui iuris* is the hierarchy. Hierarchy means a body of persons exercising sacred government or those who have sacred powers. Jesus Christ, the eternal pastor, set up the holy Church by entrusting the apostles with their mission as he himself had been sent by the Father (Jn. 20:21). He willed that their successors, the bishops namely, should be the shepherds in his Church until the end of the world. In order that the episcopate itself, however, might be one and undivided he put Peter at the head of the other apostles, and in him he set up a lasting and visible source and foundation of the unity both of faith and communion (*Lumen Gentium* 18). The Decree on the Catholic Eastern Churches viewed hierarchy as a unifying factor of the Christian

faithful (OE 2). The hierarchy legitimately constituted unites the group of Christian faithful into an ecclesial community and organizes it into a Church. CCEO distinguishes four grades of these hierarchies such as Patriarchal, Major archiepiscopal, Metropolitan and other Churches *sui iuris*.

iii) Recognition of the Supreme Authority: The supreme authority of the Church is the Roman pontiff and the College of Bishops whose head is the Roman Pontiff (canons 43 & 49). The canon affirmed the requirement of recognition of the supreme authority expressly or tacitly as a Church *sui iuris*. The former legislation on this matter (*Motu proprio Postquam Apostolicis Litteris* (Pius XII) canon 303 # 1, n. 1) stipulated as follows: "Oriental rites of which the canons treat are the Alexandrian, Antiochean, Byzantine, Chaldean and Armenian and others which the Church either expressly or tacitly recognizes as *sui iuris*". Thus a Church *sui iuris* does not exist in the Catholic canon law unless it has been recognized as such by the supreme authority of the Church. The expressed recognition can be explicit or implicit. Explicit recognition is, for example, when the head of a Church is addressed by the pope as patriarch. There is implicit recognition in accepting or paying official visits by or to the pope or his official representatives like the Apostolic Nuncio or the Cardinal Prefect of the Oriental Churches⁶.

Canon 27 says about the tacit recognition by the supreme authority. This may create confusion because it is difficult to identify which are the Churches recognized by the supreme authority tacitly. This can be practical

6 G. Nedungatt, , *A Guide to the Eastern Code*, p. 105.

in extraordinary situations like Church in China or Russia where Church is persecuted. However, in ordinary Church administration it can give confusion and uncertainty⁷.

Thus a Church *sui iuris* includes the above mentioned elements: a Christian community, united by a hierarchy according to the norm of law and expressed or tacit recognition by the supreme authority. A Church *sui iuris* is a juridic person by law itself (canon 921 # 2). This does not include the element of Rite which is defined in canon 28. Rite is the manner of living the faith of a Church *sui iuris*. It belongs to a Church as its patrimony or heritage. The manner of living the faith includes the liturgical, theological, spiritual and disciplinary heritage of the community together with its cultural and historical milieu. These elements which constitute the rite of a Church makes a Church *sui iuris* distinct from another.

II THE CATHOLIC EASTERN CHURCHES

Now let us examine which are the Catholic Eastern Churches. Neither the documents of the Second Vatican Council nor the Eastern Code gives the names or number of these Catholic Eastern Churches. There is doubt about the exact number of the Eastern Catholic Churches even among the experts in this matter⁸. Some of these Churches were dispersed, suppressed or disappeared under the communist regime. What the code provides is the five traditions from which the various rites arose. They are Alexandrian, Antiochene, Armenian, Chaldean and

Constantinopolitan traditions (canon 28 # 2). However, the Year Book of Vatican, *Annuario Pontificio* provides us with the names of these Churches under five traditions and Latin Rite. These Churches are in full communion with the Catholic Church and these Churches are of equal rank⁹. The Catholic Eastern Churches are¹⁰:

I. Alexandrian Tradition:

1. Coptic Catholic Church (Patriarchal Church)
2. Ethiopian Catholic Church (Metropolitan Church)

II. Antiochene Tradition:

3. Syro-Malankara Church (Major Archiepiscopal Church)
4. Maronite Church (Patriarchal Church)
5. Syrian Catholic Church (Patriarchal Church)

III. Armemenian Tradition:

6. Armenian Catholic Church (Patriarchal Church)

IV. Chaldean Tradition:

7. Chaldean Church (Patriarchal Church) (East Syrian)
8. Syro-Malabar Church (Major Archiepiscopal Church)

V. Constantinopolitan Tradition:

9. Albanian Church (other Church *sui iuris*) (Byzantine)
10. Belorussian Church (other Church *sui iuris*)
11. Bulgarian Church (other Church *sui iuris*)
12. Byzantine Church of the Eparchy of Krizevci (other Church *sui iuris*)
13. Greek Church (other Church *sui iuris*)

7 G. Nedungatt, , ed. , *A Guide to the Eastern Code*, p. 106.

8 G. Nedungatt, *The Spirit of the Eastren Code* Rome and Bangalore 1993, p. 61.

9 *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* n. 3.

10 This list is taken from the *Annuario Pontificio* of 2006, pp. 1158-1162.

14. Greek-Melkite Church
(Patriarchal Church)
15. Hungarian Church (other Church *sui iuris*)
16. Italo-Albanian Church
(other Church *sui iuris*)
17. Macedonian Church (other Church *sui iuris*)
18. Romanian Church (Major Archiepiscopal Church)
19. Russian Church (other Church *sui iuris*)
20. Ruthenian Church (Metropolitan Church)
21. Slovak Church (other Church *sui iuris*)
22. Ukrainian Catholic Church
(Major Archiepiscopal Church)

Thus, according to the above list there are 22 Catholic Eastern Churches and one Latin Church. The official list given in the *Annuario Pontificio 2000* does not contain the Church of Macedonia under the Constantinopolitan tradition.

Before 2001 the official list of the Church *sui iuris* contained 21 Eastern Catholic Churches¹¹. They were considered in four grades of autonomy. Six patriarchal Churches, two major archiepiscopal Churches, four metropolitan Churches and nine other Churches *sui iuris*.¹² At present there are four Major Archiepiscopal Churches. Syro-Malankara Church and Romanian Church were raised to the Major archiepiscopal status. Therefore, there are only two metropolitan Churches.

The number and the names of these Churches *sui iuris* were given differently by the

various authors after the promulgation of the Eastern Code. Sometimes the same author has given the number and the names of the recognized Churches *sui iuris* differently in different books. For example, in his book *The Spirit of the Eastern Code* published in Rome and Bangalore in 1993, G. Nedungatt has stated that the 21 Eastern Catholic Churches recognized as *sui iuris* are listed below, grouped according to five Eastern traditions. And among the Constantinopolitan tradition he listed Belorussian with a footnote that its see is vacant¹³. The same author edited the book *A Guide to the Eastern Code* in 2002 and in it we read, "In the *Annuario Pontificio 2001* "Chiesa Bielorussa" (p. 981) is included among the Eastern Catholic Churches, which may therefore, seem to add up to a total of 22 in number¹⁴. This observation is not correct because even before 2001, we find the name of this Church given in the previous issues of the *Annuarios Pontificio* and he cited the name of this Church in his book published in 1993. It was the Macedonian Church which was added in the *Annuario Pontificio 2001* and not the Church of Bielorussa. In his book *The Eastern Catholic Churches: Constitution and Governance*, published in 1992, John D Faris listed 22 Churches *sui iuris* including the Latin Church¹⁵. The difference is in the list of the Churches *sui iuris* under Constantinopolitan tradition. According to his list they are: Albanian Church, Belorussian Church, Bulgarian Church, Georgian Church, Greek

11 *Oriente cattolico*, 4th edition, Vatican City, 1974, p. 840, M. Brogi OFM, "Prospettive partiche nell'applicare alee single Chiese "sui iuris" il CCEO", in *Ius in Vita et Missione Ecclesiae*, Vatican City, 1994, p.748-749.

12 M. Brogi, "Prospettive partiche nell'applicare alee single Chiese "sui iuris" il CCEO", p. 750.

13 G. Nedungatt, *The Spirit of the Eastern Code*, p. 62.

14 G. Nedungatt, , ed. , *A Guide to the Eastern Code*, pp. 69 & 106.

15 J. D. Faris, *The Eastern Catholic Churches: Constitution and Governance*, p. 46.

Church, Greek-Melkite Patriarchal Church of Antioch, Hungarian Church, Italo-Albanian Church, Romanian Church, Russian Church, Ruthenian Church, Slovak Church, Ukrainian Major Archiepiscopal Church, Church of Krizevci (Croatia).

Georgian Church is listed among the Churches *sui iuris* under the Byzantine tradition which we don't find in the *Annuario Pontificio*. He didn't mention the Church of Macedonia.

Thus we notice the names of these Churches especially in the case of the Churches under Constantinopolitan tradition, are different in the writings of various authors.

III. THE POSSIBILITY OF NEW CHURCHES *SUI IURIS*

Is there any possibility of a new Church *sui iuris* in the Catholic Church. In the former legislation, *Motu Proprio Postquam Apostolicis Litteris* canon 303 there was the clause "as well as the other rites which the Church expressly or tacitly recognizes as being *sui iuris*". The Eastern Code does not close the possibility of erecting and recognizing new Churches *sui iuris*. The requirements are stipulated in canon 27: a community of the Christian faithful, hierarchy according to the norm of law and recognition of the supreme authority.

The Decree on the Catholic Eastern Churches, *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* states, "since the patriarchal system is the traditional form of government in the Eastern Churches, the holy ecumenical council wishes, where there is needed, new patriarchates to be set up. This is reserved to an ecumenical council or to the

Roman Pontiff" (n. 11). And canon 57 # 1 states, "The erection, restoration, modification and suppression of patriarchal Churches are reserved to the supreme authority of the Church". G. Nedungatt opines: "analogous procedure applies also to the other Churches *sui iuris*, including the last and fourth rank"¹⁶. He points out also the possibility of the formation and recognition of a new Eastern rite basing on the clause in the canon 28 # 2 that is, 'unless it is established otherwise'. Paragraph two of canon 28 states "The rites dealt with in this Code, unless it is established otherwise, are those which arose from the Alexandrian, Antiochene, Armenian, Chaldean and Constantinopolitan traditions" This clause thus opens the new prospects of evangelization, which are not closed with five traditions. As an example he cites the Indian context. In the process of evangelization by an Eastern Catholic Church like the Syro-Malabar Church, a new rite can arise through inculturation, just as various rites originated in the past¹⁷.

In a talk the Archbishop emeritus Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry stated: "There are now twenty-two such *sui iuris* Churches in the Catholic Communion. The possibilities for more new *sui iuris* Churches also are kept open according to the Council documents (OE. 3, 11, etc.) and canonical norms (c.57). Such new *sui iuris* Churches may be recognized, when ecclesial Communities not in communion make a communion with the Catholic Church, as it happened with regard to the Syro-Malankara Church. There is even the possibility of the supreme authority of

16 G. Nedungatt, , ed. , *A Guide to the Eastern Code*, p. 106.

17 G. Nedungatt, , ed. , *A Guide to the Eastern Code*, p. 115.

the Church recognizing the regional diversities in a church *sui iuris* as sufficient for being recognized as different *sui iuris* Churches. So can there be a Patriarchal Church of Africa, or of South America, etc; all following the Latin rite”¹⁸ He further observed: “Rite is not a constitutive element of *sui iuris* Church, although in the manner of living the Christian faith a *sui iuris* Church will manifest a ritual heritage formed through culture and historical circumstances of its faithful (c. 28). Hence the faithful of one and the same rite may be formed into different *sui iuris* Churches or conversely also the faithful observing different rites may form one Church *sui iuris*”.

He also pointed out the facts concerning the existence of ethnic groups within one rite and the Church *sui iuris*. “So also faithful having the same ritual heritage and belonging to the same *sui iuris* Church can have, on the basis of ethnical difference, different particular Churches existing in a common territory. For example, the eparchy of Kottayam co-existing with the other eparchies of the Syro-Malabar Church within its territorium proprium - or the Latin dioceses of Cochin and Alleppy having own parishes in the common territory. A particular Church of any *sui iuris* Church can have parish units exclusively for the faithful of a different ritual heritage. For example the Latin Archdiocese of Bangalore having also Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara parishes. Similarly the Syro-Malabar eparchy of Kottayam has also Syro-Malankara parishes. There is also a case of communities of

different ritual heritages in a given territory being recognized as a *sui iuris* Church consisting of only one particular Church (eparchy); namely the eparchy of Krizevci is a *sui iuris* Church for the Serbs, Ruthenians, Ukrainians, Slavic Macedonians and Romanians in the territory of the former Yugoslavia”

While dealing with the Ruthenian Church in The United States of America, John D. Faris presents the present situation of this Church in USA. The Ruthenians lost their connections with their ancestral homelands. He opined that though Rome didn’t accept the changes in several ethnic groups, the disappearance of European ties makes the four dioceses of the Ruthenian Church of Pittsburgh with around 250,000 faithful, a candidate for recognition by Rome as an autonomous metropolitan Church outside the original historical territory¹⁹.

Five Catholic ordinaries are there as given in *Annuario Pontificio 2006*²⁰. An Ordinariate is a canonical jurisdiction erected to encompass faithful of diverse Churches *sui iuris* who reside within a geographic territory, but are unserved by hierarchy peculiar to their individual Churches *sui iuris*. There are five such jurisdictions. None of these five has the potential to be designated as a Church *sui iuris*. They are: Ordinariate of Argentina, Faithful of the Oriental Rites, Ordinariate of Austria, Faithful of the Eastern Rites (Byzantine), Ordinariate of Brazil, Faithful of the Oriental Rites, Ordinariate of France, Faithful of the

18 Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry, Talk during the International Theological symposium on 28 January 2002 at Paurastya Vidypitham, Vadavathoor.

19 J. D. Faris, *The Eastern Catholic Churches: Constitution and Governance*, p. 60.

20 *Annuario Pontificio 2006*, p. 1162.

Eastern Rites and Byzantine Polish Catholics in Poland.

We can see other Christian communities **without hierarchy**, for example Byzantine Georgian Catholic Church. There are **Eastern Catholic communities with hierarchy, but not of a Church *sui iuris***. Byzantine Czech Catholics, Byzantine Montenegrin Catholics and Byzantine Serbian Catholics are examples.

Conclusion

Though the first canon of the *Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium* states the canons of this Code concern all and only the Eastern Catholic Churches, this canon does not identify these Churches. Canon 27 defines a Church *sui iuris* but, here too we don't have the names or number of these Churches. We don't find the names or number of these

Churches anywhere else in the Code. We find the names of these Churches in *Annuario Pontificio*, the Year Book of the Holy See. Accordingly, till 2000 there were 21 Eastern Catholic Churches *sui iuris*. From 2001 onwards we find the Church of Macedonia included in the list. The Code didn't close the possibility of recognizing new Churches *sui iuris* in the Catholic Church by the supreme authority of the Church. For this, there should be a Christain community united by a hierarchy according to the norm of law. Thus the present number of 22 Eastern Churches may increase if the supreme authority recognizes new Churches. It is true that the tacit recognition mentioned in can 27 may cause confusion to identify all the Churches *sui iuris*.



BY REASON OF ENDOWMENT THE PATRONAGE OF THE CHURCH OF ANGAMALY IS RESERVED TO THE KING OF PORTUGAL AND THE ALGARVES

*Pope Clement VIII
For perpetual memory*

Having been appointed to the supreme see of the militant Church with the fullness of apostolic power by the greatest benevolence of our Redeemer, we willingly devote our attention to the prosperous state of any of the Churches and lest those same Churches suffer any damage in temporal matters by lack of material resources and the authority of their prelates be diminished, we are also intent that suitable remedies be adopted and we treat benevolently with correspondingly worthy favours and graces the intention of the Catholic kings to dedicate generously their assistance and efforts for relieving the needs of suchlike Churches and prelates, just as, after due consideration of the characteristic of places, circumstances and persons, we consider in the Lord to be profitable and conducive to salvation.

1. Since in the Church of Angamaly, which is situated in the East Indies under the rule of a gentile king, namely the one of Cochin, and which lacks any endowment, on account of the death of Mar Abraham, of blessed

memory, the former archbishop of Angamaly, who died out side the Roman Curia, which Church has been deprived of the consolation of a pastor, upon the advice of our brothers, by means of another letter of ours, we have recently suppressed and extinguished in perpetuity the name and title of archbishop and metropolitan Church, as well as the archiepiscopal seat, dignity, superiority, pre-eminence and the metropolitan right in its entirety, and have reduced that same Church to the status of a simple cathedral Church of one bishop, to be, in future, suffragan of the archbishop for the time being of Goa, and have subjected it to the metropolitan authority of the Church of Goa, as is more amply contained in the above mentioned letter.

2. As our most beloved son in Christ, Philip, Catholic king of Portugal and the Algarves has recently had recently had notification sent to us that he himself, prompted by the example of his predecessors, the Kings, of Portugal and the Algarves, who on account of their very great piety, saw to

the erection and constitution of different cathedral Churches in those aforementioned regions with a view to the propagation of the Catholic religion and endowed these from their own resources, intends in the future to assign, or perhaps now has already assigned, to the episcopal table of the said Church of Angamaly, in order that the prelate of the same for the time being may maintain his state in a more befitting manner according to the requirements of the pontifical dignity, and carry out more adequately the obligations incumbent upon him, an annual income of five hundred gold cruzados of Portuguses currency, which amount to about three hundred and seventy-five gold ducats of the camera (apostolica), due and belonging to the same Philip, king for the time being of Portugal and the Algarves, from the Indies, payable in its entirety to the bishop for the time being of Angamaly, or to his legitimate procurator, by the same king Philip and his successors, the Kings for the time being of Portugal and the Algarves, for each single year, until such time as for the same Church of Angamaly real and effective provision has been made by means of another adequate and equivalent endowment by King Philip or by any one of his successors.

3. We, considering it right and expedient to foster and treat with especial grace and favour this so pious and genrous benefaction of king Philip towards the bishop and the Church of Angamaly, swayed in this regard by the petitions of the same king Philip, with this present letter by apostolic authority bestow and assign to the same (episcopall)

table, the income from the annual revenues as aforementioned, as of the present moment, should this be the case, or otherwise from now as if then, and vice versa, from whatever date when it will have been assigned.

4. Moreover to king Philip and his successors, in virtue of the present letter and in view of this endowment, we reserve, grant and attribute in perpetuity the right of patronage and of presenting to us and to the Roman Pontiff for the time being, a person suitable for the aforesaid Church of Angamaly, on the occasion of a vacancy henceforth, whenever and wherever it should occur, even at the Apostolic See, such person to be set over the Church of Angamaly as its bishop and pastor by ourselves and by the Roman Pontiff for the time being, upon such presentation and no other.

5. We decree that the "ius patronatus" and the right of presentation in this way pertain to king Philip and to his aforementioned successors in virtue of the true, mere and real endowment of the same Church of Angamaly, and that such cannot be abrogated, nor declared abrogated by the said [Apostolic] See for any reason whatsoever except by explicit consent of Philip or the king for the time being, and were it to happen that it be abrogated in any other way, that abrogation and its effects would be null and void.

6. Notwithstanding constitutions and ordinances of the Apostolic See, and those of the aforesaid Church of Angamaly, even under oath, whether enforced by confirmation of the Apostolic See or of any other authority,

or by statutes, customs or any other measure whatsoever to the contrary.

7. It is, however, our will and we declare such by the same authority and in the same terms, that in the absence of the endowment or annual payment due as related above, the reservation and concession of this "ius

patronatus" be null and void, and be considered such, and no longer favourable either to Philip or to the aforementioned king for the time being.

Given in Rome at St. Peter's under the ring of the Fisherman, on 4 August 1600, in the ninth year of our Pontificate.



THE RESTORATION THE METROPOLITAN STATUS OF THE CHURCH OF ANGAMALY

Paul Bishop

Servent of the sevants of God For perpetual memory.

Th Roman Pontiff, supreme promoter of equity and good, has been wont to restore after the passage of time to the original state, and by means of the power divinely conferred on him from on high, those measures considered by other Roman Pontiffs, his predecessors, to have been appropriately decided and ordained concerning the status of certain states and Churches, and this in order that the tranquillity of the states as well as the honour and dignity of the Churches may be furthered and the dangers of scandal to souls may be a avoided, just as, after due consideration of the characteristics of persons, times and places, he considers in the Lord to the profitable and conducive to salvation.

1. On a previous occasion our predecessor Pope Clement VIII of happy memory, prompted by certain causes existing at that time in the Church of Angamaly, situated in distant regions among pagans, schismatics and other followers of errors, and over which Church our venerable brother Francis, bishop of Angamaly is known to preside at present, which Chruch lacking at that time any suffragan and certainly deprived of the consolation of

a pastor, by means of a certain letter of his, suppressed and extinguished in perpetuity the name and title of archbishop and metropolitan Church, as well as the archiepiscopal seat, dignity, superiority, pre-eminence and the metropolitan right in its entirety, and reduced that same Church to the status of a simple cathedral Church of one bishop, to be, in the future, suffragan of the archbishop for the time being of Goa, and subjected it to the metropolitan authority of the Church of Goa, as is more amply contained in the above mentioned letter.

2. Since, however, as we have learnt, this suppression, extinction, reduction and subjection have caused distress among our beloved sons, the clergy and the people of the city of Angamaly, lest the Church of Angamaly should suffer any loss in temporal and spiritual matters on the pretext of this suppression, extinction, reduction and subjection, we, desiring to provide in right manner for the duties of our pastoral office, by our own initiative (*motu proprio*), and not at the petition of the said bishop Francis or presented to us by any other person on his

behalf, but of our own deliberation alone, by our own apostolic authority, by the advice of our venerable brethren the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church of the Consistorial Congregation, by this present letter, in the aforesaid Church of Angamaly restore in perpetuity the name and title of archbishop and metropolitan Church, as well as the archiepiscopal seat, dignity and pre-eminence and the metropolitan right in its entirety, and further likewise with the aforementioned authority and in the aforementioned terms in perpetuity we restore, reinstate, and fully reintegrate the same Church of Angamaly, contrary to its suppression, extinction and the letter of our predecessor Clement, and each and everything contained in it and elsewhere, to the full and original selfsame status it had before the aforesaid suppression and letter, in such a way that from henceforth and for all future times bishop Francis and his successors in the said Church of Angamaly can and must use and enjoy perpetually the name and title of metropolitan Church, and archbishop, as well as the archiepiscopal seat, dignity, superiority and pre-eminence and the metropolitan right in its entirety, in each and every particular, just as if the suppression and the aforesaid letter had never been issued. We also restore the Church of Angamaly to the status and existence of an archiepiscopal and metropolitan Church as it was beforehand and by the same authority and in the same terms, we also exempt and liberate it perpetually from the suffragan status and from the superiority and metropolitan right of the Church of Goa and its archbishop.

3. We decree that the Church of Angamaly is restored, reinstated, exempt and free in

perpetuity, contrary to its suppression and the aforesaid letter, and that the present letter cannot at any time or for any reason, by defect of subreption, nullifying defect, or defect of our intention or of any other fault whatsoever, be censured, impugned or revoked, but that it is and shall always and in perpetuity remain valid and effective and will obtain full and integral effect; thus and not otherwise shall be judged by any judges whatsoever, even commissioners enjoying any authority whatsoever, even auditors for the causes of the apostolic palace, with all faculty or authority of judging or interpreting otherwise, and if anyone were to attempt to do so by any authority, either knowingly or unknowingly, such would be null and void.

4. Notwithstanding the suppression, the previous letter and other acts, as well as any constitutions and ordinances of the Apostolic See and whatsoever else to the contrary.

5. Let it be absolutely unlawful for anyone to infringe upon or dare temerariously to contradict this document, our restitution, restoration, reintegration, reduction, exemption, liberation and decree. If anyone should presume to attempt such a thing, he shall know that he will incur the wrath of Almighty God and of his blessed Apostles Peter and Paul.

Given in Rome, at St. Peter's on 22 December, in the year of the Incarnation of Our Lord 1608, the fourth year of our Pontificate.

BOOK REVIEW

Scaria Kanniyakonil, The Fundamentals of Bioethics: Legal Perspectives and Ethical Approaches (Kottayam: OIRSI, 2007) pp. 367+XIII

Fr. Scaria Kanniyakonil is an Inidan priest who received his doctorate in moral theology from the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium. In this scientifically written book he presents the fundamentals of bioethics. He discusses mainly the definition, history, codes, philosophical approaches, religious approaches of bioethics, and the application of ethical approaches in living organ donation and transplantation.

This book has ten chapters. The first chapter describes introduction to bioethics, where he deals with definition, terms, history, and different bioethical approaches. The second chapter is about codes and laws in bioethics, which includes all the ancient codes and the recent laws in bioethics. By presenting different codes and oaths, he highlights the concept of sanctity of life in medicine and health care ethics. The third chapter concentrates on the deontological and utilitarian approaches in bioethics. The fourth chapter deals with principlism. Here he presents mainly Anglo-American principlism, and also gives a short introduction to European principlism. Another interesting ethical discussion can be seen in the fifth chapter. He explains the teleological approach in bioethics. Both in the Catholic moral theology and secular approaches proportionality and personalistic ethics are the new trends. According to the author, the principle of proportionality alone does not work in the moral decision making of bioethics, which is deficient in virtues. In this context he proposes the relevance of values and virtues in bioethics.

The sixth chapter describes virtue ethics. One gets a clear picture regarding the concept of virtues in bioethics. The author beautifully elaborates on the virtue of charity from the Bible and the writings of the theologians. In the seventh chapter, he combines virtue and principle, i.e., the approach of charity with proportionality in living organ donation and transplantation. The last three chapters of this book state religious bioethics. Hence the eighth chapter is on Catholic concept on human body

and life. By analysing the Greek and Hebrew concepts different aspects of the body and human life are discussed. The ninth chapter describes catholic bioethical principles, which covers mainly the principle of totality and the principle of double effect. I can clearly say, Fr. Scaria has written a magnificent contribution to the fundamentals of Catholic bioethics. The last chapter discusses bioethics in the Jewish, Eastern churches, Anglicans, Protestant, Islamic, and Hindu tradition. Compared to other chapters, it is very brief. However, one gets also a short introduction to bioethics in other religious tradition.

I have no doubt that it is a wonderful contribution to the fundamentals and the issues of bioethics. It is very useful for students of bioethics, teachers, professionals, hospital managers, chaplains, hospital counsellors, family apostolate ministers, and writers of bioethics. This fine work can also be of prolific assistance to ethics committees in hospitals, health care centres, pharmaceutical companies, bioethics centres, and to national and international non-governmental organizations. Take and read.

Dr. Stephen Chirapanath
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NEWS

Bishop Joseph Perumthottam as the New Archbishop of the Changanacherry Archdiocese

Bishop Joseph Perumthottam was born on July 5, 1948, at Punnathura. He had his education in St. Joseph's High School, Punnathura and St. Berchmans' College, Changanassery. Completing his seminary studies at St. Thomas Petit Seminary, Changanassery and St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Vadavathoor, Kottayam, he was ordained priest on 18 December 1974 by Archbishop Mar Joseph Powathil, then auxiliary bishop of Changanacherry. After his ministry as assistant parish priest for a few years he was appointed in 1979 as Director of Sandesnilayam, the Catechetical Centre of the Archdiocese and Chaplain of Catholic Workers' Movement of the Archdiocese. In the Catechetical field, he introduced many training programmes, including Catechetical Leaders' Training (CLT), which is being continued to this day by Sandesnilayam.

In 1983 he was sent for higher studies, at Gregorian University Rome where he took doctorate in Church History. Back from Rome, in 1989 he was appointed professor of St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary Vadavathoor and Missionary Orientation Centre, Manganam, Kottayam and vicar of St. Sebastian's Church, Kodinattumkunnu. During this period he was instrumental in starting Marthoma Vidyanikethan at Changanacherry, the higher institute of religious sciences for the laity at the initiative and active support of Archbishop Mar Joseph Powathil. This institute is a unique venture affiliated to Paurastya Vidyapitam, Vadavthoor, conferring P.G. degree recognized by the Congregation for Catholic Education, Rome and Rev. Dr. Joseph Perumthottam had been at its helm for one decade till he became the auxiliary bishop. Simultaneously he had been vicar of Mar Sleeba Church, Ponga. He was nominated auxiliary bishop on 24 April 2002 and was ordained bishop by Archbishop Mar Joseph Powathil at St. Mary's Metropolitan Church, Changanacherry, on 20 May 2002, the 116th anniversary of the Archdiocese. His installation is on 19th March 2007 at St. Mary's Cathedral Changanacherry (www.smcnews.com).

Bishop Andrews Thazhath as the New Archbishop of the Trichur Archdiocese

Bishop Andrews Thazhath was born on 13th December 1951 at Pudukkad, Trichur. After having completed school education at Pudukkad and priestly formation at St. Mary's

Minor Seminary, Trichur and St. Josph's Pontifical Seminary, Aluva, he was ordained priest at Nandhikkara for the Eparchy of Trichur on 14th March 1977. He holds Bachelor's degree in Theology (B.D.) from Aluva and Doctor's degree in the Eastern Canon Law (DOCL) from the Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome.

He served the Eparchy as Asst. Parish Priest, Parish Priest, Prefect of the Minor Seminary, Secretary, Vice-Chancellor and Chancellor of the Eparchial Curia, Rector of Dolours Basilica and Adj. Judicial Vicar and Judge of the Eparchial Tribunal. On 7th August 2003 Pope John Paul II conferred on him the honour of Papal Chamberline. He was nominated the Auxiliary Bishop of the Archeparchy of Trichur when he was serving as the President of the Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Ordinary Tribunal of Ernakulam -Angamaly, the Syncellus of the Archeparchy, the Working Chairman and Managing Director of Jeevan Telecasting Corporation and the President of the Oriental Canon Law Society of India. Mgr. Andrews Thazhath was nominated the first Auxiliary Bishop of the Archeparchy and the Titular Bishop of Aptuca on 19th March 2004. He was ordained Bishop by H.G. Mar Jacob Thoomkuzhy on the 1st of May 2004. His installation is on 18th March 2007 at Lourde's Metropolitan Cathedral, Trichur (www.smcnews.com).

New Diocese Of Mavelikkara Created, Bishop Joshua Ignathios Appointed First Bishop

Mavelikkara in Kerala has been made a new diocese of the Syro-Malankara Rite and Auxiliary Bishop of Thiruvananthapuram, Mar Joshua Ignathios has been appointed as the first bishop of the new diocese. Mavelikkara would belong to the Metropolitan province of Thiruvananthapuram. The new diocese will include the revenue districts of Alappuzha and parts of Kollam district with 92 parishes and about 35,000 Catholics. The official inauguration of the new diocese and the installation of the new Bishop would be held at Mavelikkara on February 16. Bishop Ignathios was born in 1950 at Kottarakkara and was ordained priest in 1978. He was made the auxiliary bishop of Trivandrum in April 1998 (CBCI News).

Cyril Mar Baselius: Passed Away

The first Major Archbishop and Catholicos of the Malankara Catholic Church Cyril Mar Baselius passed away on 18th January 2007. He was 73. The Major Archbishop was diabetic and had been undergoing dialysis for the last six months. He was admitted to a private hospital here on Thursday morning following complaints of uneasiness. Archbishop Cyril Mar Baselios was appointed Metropolitan Archbishop of Trivandrum on November 29, 1995. The installation took place on December 14, 1995. As the Metropolitan Archbishop he received sacred Pallium from the Holy Father Pope John Paul II on January 9, 1996 in Vatican. Pope Paul II, has raised the Archdiocese of Trivandrum (Syro-Malankara) to a Major

Archbishopric and at the same time elevated Archbishop Cyril Mar Baselios as the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malankara Church on January 10, 2005. Earlier, Archbishop Baselios was Bishop of Bathery and has been a Bishop for 29 years. The funeral took place on 20th January 2007 at the St. Mary's Cathedral, Pattom (www.smcnews.com).

Fr Chacko Aerath Appointed Apostolic Visitator For The Syro-Malankaras

Pope Benedict XVI has appointed Fr. Chacko Aerath, OIC titular Bishop of Bapara as Apostolic Visitator for the Syro-Malankaras in India, outside the proper territory. After completing his Seminary studies, he was ordained priest on October 2, 1986. He pursued his higher studies and obtained Doctorate in Moral Theology from Alfonsia Academy, Rome. He was the Procurator of his Congregation as well as Vice-Rector of the pre-Novitiate and Home Minister of the Novitiate. From 1996-2000, Fr. Aerath was appointed Rector of the seminary of the Congregation, Bethany Vedavijnana Peeth, Pune and at the same time he taught Moral Theology at JDV, Pune and at St. Joseph's Seminary, Alwaye. He became Provincial of the Navajyothi Province (2000-2006) and during the same period he was also a visiting professor at St. Mary's Major Seminary in Trivandrum (CBCI News).

Archbishop Isaac Mar Cleemis Thottunkal as the New 'Catholicos Bawa'

Archbishop Isaac Mar Cleemis Thottunkal, aged 47, presently Archbishop of Tiruvalla has been elected 'Catholicos Bawa', head of the Catholic Syro-Malankara Church. He was elected by the Syro-Malankara Bishops' Synod which met Feb. 7-10, 2007 in Catholicos Centre, Trivandrum, Kerala. The new Major Archbishop would be called Catholicos Bawa Baselios Mar Cleemis and would be installed Major Archbishop of Trivadrum Archdiocese on March 05, 2007. The Major Metropolitan See of Trivandrum was vacant due to the death of His Beatitude Cyril Mar Baselios who went to his heavenly reward on Jan. 18, 2007. Archbishop Isaac Mar Cleemis is the Second Vice President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI), elected during the General Body Meeting 2006 held in Bangalore. The newly-elected Major Archbishop was born on June 15, 1959 and ordained priest on Aug. 15, 1986. He was consecrated Bishop on Aug. 15, 2001 and made Archbishop on May 15, 2006 (CBCI News).

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